

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 to 7, 9 to 15 and 17 to 22 are pending. No claims are allowed.

The pending claims were rejected as being unpatentable over Sears et al. (US 2002/0000683 A1) in view of Hamada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,885,340) and in further view of Cobb et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,100,320) and Sato (U.S. Patent No. 4,619,879). Independent process Claims 1, 10 and 18 have been amended to clearly recite that the process relates to the use of temperature sensitive natural fillers which would degrade without the metal salt in the pre-extruded mixture of the polymer and the metal salt. This process has not been suggested by any of the references alone or in combination. Sears et al. does not even recognize the problem of temperature degradation of natural fibers or fillers, since they disclose "pulp" as fillers. Cobb et al. relates to extruding with a metal salt; however, there are no fibers present, since they would create a problem with the finish of the article (see column 6, lines 17 to 23). Cobb et al. is concerned with melt fracture on the surface of the product without fibers which produce a frosted surface in the melt at 250° to 290°C (column 1,

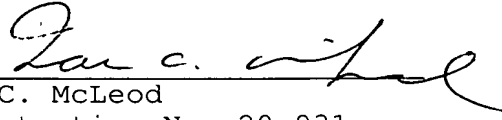
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Amdt. Dated: October 4, 2006  
Reply to Office Action of July 20, 2006

line 45) for the polyester. At these temperatures, the natural fibers would degrade. Thus, Cobb et al. does not even recognize the problem much less Applicants' solution. Hamada et al. relates to polyamides (nylon) with an ethylene ionomer resin and epoxy or carbonate compound. These compositions are molded at 280°C which is far above the temperatures of "less than 200°C". Again, this reference does not even recognize the problem or Applicants' solution. Sato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,619,879) describes fillers (column 3, lines 11 to 34), none of which are temperature sensitive natural fillers. Thus, this reference does not recognize the problem or Applicants' solution. For the above reasons, the combination of references could not possibly produce the presently claimed invention. Reconsideration is requested.

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It is now believed that Claims 1 to 7, 9 to 15  
and 17 to 22 are in condition for allowance. Notice of  
Allowance is requested.

Respectfully,

  
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Ian C. McLeod  
Registration No. 20,931

IAN C. McLEOD, P.C.  
2190 Commons Parkway  
Okemos, Michigan 48864

Telephone: (517) 347-4100  
Facsimile: (517) 347-4103  
Email: [mcldmyn@comcast.net](mailto:mcldmyn@comcast.net)